

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 089625
ORIGIN ARA-14

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APPROVED BY:ARA/CCA:WSSMITH

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USINT HAVANA

INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STATE 089625

FOL PANAMA 2262 SENT ACTION SECSTATE APR 5, 1978 REPEATED TO
YOU QUOTE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PN

SUBJECT: CUBAN/COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN PANAMA

REF: A. STATE 08644 B. PANAMA 0905

1. REF B COVERED SALIENT POINTS OF FOREIGN COMMUNIST, INCLUDING CUBAN, PRESENCE IN PANAMA. THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ARE KEYED TO THE GEYER STORY QUOTED IN REF A:

2. CUBA HAS OF COURSE HAD AN OFFICIAL PRESENCE IN PANAMA SINCE THE TWO COUNTRIES RESTORED RELATIONS IN 1974. HOWEVER, IT IS OUR JUDGMENT THAT THE LEVEL OF CUBAN ACTIVITIES-- DIPLOMATIC, ECONOMIC OR OTHER--HAS IN FACT DIMINISHED OVER THE PAST YEAR OR TWO.

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3. THE EMBASSY HAS NO EVIDENCE THAT "A NUMBER OF PANAMANIAN HAVE BEEN TRAINED IN INTELLIGENCE IN CUBA."

4. IT IS TRUE THAT COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE HAS DIMINISHED UNDER COL. PAREDES, BUT WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT-- AND DOUBT THE EXISTENCE OF--"CUBAN ADVISERS"

IN THE MINISTRY UNDER GERARDO GONZALEZ. WE DO NOT BELIEVE GONZALEZ IS NOW A COMMUNIST, THOUGH HE PROBABLY WAS IN THE PAST.

5. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THAT THE HEALTH AND LABOR MINISTRIES HERE ARE "COMMUNIST LED". LABOR MINISTER AHUMADA IS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN A COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBER AS A YOUNG MAN, THOUGH HE HAS LONG SINCE RENOUNCED THAT MEMBERSHIP. TO SAY THERE ARE 60 CUBANS IN THE CUBAN EMBASSY HERE IS AN EXAGGERATION. THE TOTAL OF DIPLOMATIC AND OFFICIAL PRINCIPALS IS PROBABLY AROUND 25. IN ADDITION, SOME TEN CUBAN WIVES WORK IN THE EMBASSY. WE HAVE NOT PREVIOUSLY HEARD--AND DOUBT--THAT PANAMA "HAS BEEN GIVING PANAMANIAN PASSPORTS TO CUBANS WANTING TO GET INTO NICARAGUA AND OTHER KEY AREAS."

6. WE HAVE NO OBJECTION TO RELEASE OF PARAS 2 THROUGH 5 TO SENTATORS FOR REPLY TO THE GEYER STORY, IF NECESSARY. JORDEN UNQUOTE VANCE

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